

"Mockery"; and Also "Beckoning Roads"

By HARRY ESTY DOUNCE.

THIS deals with two first novels, one of which, *Miss Judson's*, is a second.

In *Mockery*, by Alexander MacFarlan, an original plot notion is driven through by a good deal of native story telling force. Better than that, the plot is no mere mechanical toy, but is of the higher order which proceeds from and depends on a characterization—and in this case the characterization was no easy one to do. In life Mr. MacFarlan's hero, Grant, is very common. In art, simply and convincingly presented, he is rare.

Mockery then is an arresting first book. Just how promising it is seems to me to be a question of Mr. MacFarlan's age. If he is under twenty-five his career will bear a lot of watching. If older, we can only hope for the best. Grant as a human study is decidedly introspective. Any young writer of some little gift, with a strong introspective tendency, has within himself the material for at least one interesting portrait. That, however, is hardly a stock in trade. I want to see Mr. MacFarlan draw his next portrait from life outside. If he does, and as well as he has done Grant, then I shall hurrah for him.

Grant, you see, is the peculiarly sensitive constitutional liar, the child cursed with a very thin skin and compensated with extra imagination. Such children, well brought up, furnish most of the good fiction writers. Spoiled, they grow up to be Grants—"queer," lonely, dolefully unhappy, altogether ineffectual. The latter process is this: the child begins telling harmless fairy stories without incentive. Then it sees that applied story telling will save it spankings. Then, unless wisely directed, it develops an ego—which it gratifies by lying about itself to other people. The adult product is a shirk and a tall talker.

Whereas if the same child is fortunate in its parents and surroundings the adult product, like as not, is an estimable novelist and enjoys the perusal of tactful critiques, like this, of its first novel! But when he observes a Grant in his wretchedness the novelist understands him.



Mr. MacFarlan's Grant is a good job, albeit one somewhat crude and distinctly brutal—for he refuses Grant the sense of humor, without which Grants are unbear-

able. His idea was to confront this fellow, at the climax of the story, with the revelation of a woman counterpart of his own disabilities, each of them up to that

point having successfully humbugged the other. He manages it very cleverly, although the woman is not a second study, only a mechanism.

Two minor characters are good. One is a young girl, half Scotch, half Spanish. The other is a benevolent paternal party of the type whose excess social instinct works out in unclean religiosity and in forming Bible classes. The writing is energetic, sometimes remarkable, generally just good enough to make you wish the writer had taken a trifle more pains. The climax of action, I see, is being called strong and surprising. So it is—in the sense in which a blackjack over your head from behind would be. It is an ingenious yellow substitute for a genuine culmination and resolution.

While Mr. MacFarlan has earned a success, I rather doubt that *Mockery* will have it, and for once I don't think the dear public will be to blame. The trouble is that although Grant is interesting as a study you cannot care a rap what is to become of him either way. He is disagreeable but not irritating, and pitiable but not appealing. It is only past the middle of the book that any character appears in whom you take any sort of emotional interest.

Miss Jeanne Judson's *Beckoning Roads* may indeed be her first novel between covers of its own, but I happen to know her *Crowns of Tin*, recently serialized. The latter was a very busy yarn, with the business pretty skilfully conducted; it showed Miss Judson equal at least to telling the kind of story which some editors and all movie magnates prefer. And some of the people in it were quite live. *Beckoning Roads* is still busier—positively feverish. But the people are no thicker than the paper. The whole thing suggests cruel pressure. It reads as if a publisher had approved of *Crowns of Tin* and had said "Fine! Now bring me another with stronger feminine appeal by Thursday night!"

MOCKERY. By ALEXANDER MACFARLAN. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.50.
BECKONING ROADS. By JEANNE JUDSON. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.50.

Books Received in Week Ending February 26

Fiction.

THE HIGHWAYMAN. By H. C. BAILEY. Romantic novel of the days of Queen Anne of England. The Queen, the great Duke of Marlborough and James Stuart are characters. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.60.

THE WHITE HORSE AND THE RED-HAIRED GIRL. By KENYON GAMBIER. An American forced to land behind enemy lines in Belgium is greeted by an English girl as her husband. She takes him to dinner with a Belgian woman, who flirts with a German officer. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

BECKONING ROADS. By JEANNE JUDSON. Story of a girl brought up on a Canadian ranch whose impulsive marriage results in a whirlwind life in New York. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.50.

TOO FAT TO FIGHT. By REX BRACH. How Norman Dairymple, who couldn't get in at Plattsburg, finally won the war cross. New York: Harper & Brothers. 60 cents.

THE PLAYGROUND OF SATAN. By BEATRICE BASKERVILLE. A remarkable vivid picture of life in Poland during the war. Interesting love story. New York: W. J. Watt & Co. \$1.50.

THE SKY PILOT IN NO MAN'S LAND. By RALPH CONNOR. Novel dealing with the experiences of "the man of the West on the new frontier." New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

ACCORDING TO ORDERS. By F. BRITTEN AUSTIN. Short stories, eleven of them, showing vividly the German mind under the stress of war. Several have appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

DERE BILL: MABLE'S LOVE LETTERS TO HER BOOKIE. By FLORENCE ELIZABETH SUMMERS. The hitherto suppressed documents in the affairs of *Dere Mable*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 75 cents.

THE BLACK STONE. By GEORGE GIBBS. Struggles of a young American millionaire and a German spy to obtain possession of the Black Stone of Mecca. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$1.50.

THE WAY OF A MAN. By THOMAS DIXON. The woman editor of a radical publication in present-day New York who believes in none of the conventions falls in love with a man and sets herself to the task of getting him to acquiesce in her social ideas. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$1.50.

ANCHORS AWEIGH. By HARRIET WELLES. Short stories of life in the American navy by the wife of Rear Admiral Welles. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.

War Books.

TEN YEARS NEAR THE GERMAN FRONTIER. By MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN. Really a biography of the author's career as American Minister to Denmark; but written entirely from the angle of the war, which developed during his diplomatic service. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$3.

SUBMARINES AND ANTI-SUBMARINES. By SIR HENRY NEWBOLT. Collection of tales of the submarine campaign based on authentic narratives hitherto unpublished; with some history of the submarine. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.25.

History.

MEXICO TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW. By E. D. THORNBURGH. Mexican history in chapters leading up to an outline of present affairs—political, social, financial and economic—in the republic. New York: Macmillan Company. \$2.

A HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA. By WILLIAM WARREN SWETT. A general history of South America, with reading references, maps and illustrations and with some account of present day conditions. Indexed. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$3.

THE OPEN DOOR POLICY AND THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CHINA. By SHUTARO TOMIMAS. The principal part of the book consists of paper written in the summer of 1915 by the author, an instructor in Japanese at Columbia. The last quarter of the volume consists of verses in Japanese. New York: A. G. Seiler, or the author, 149 A street N. E., Washington, D. C. \$1.75.

LABOR IN IRISH HISTORY. By JAMES CONNOLLY. A historical review of economic and political conditions "which have given birth to the psychology of the Irish proletariat." The author was commandant-general of the Irish force in the Irish insurrection of 1916, for which he was put to death. New York: nelly Press. Thirty seven nelly street. \$1.

Essays.

THE CANDLE OF VISION. By A. E. The author is the well known Irish writer George Russell. Among his subjects are meditation, dreams, intuition, power and the Celtic imagination. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.60.

For Children.

THE NOAH'S ARK BOOK. By "FISH." Cartoon in color with rhymes by "FISH" and MARGARET LAVINGTON. New York: John Lane Company.

A LITTLE CHAFF. By MARGARET LAVINGTON and HELEN URQUHART. Rhymes with illustrations, some of which are in color. New York: John Lane Company.

Reconstruction.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION. By LIAUT. Gen. the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS. The complete text of one of the foremost plans for a League of Nations as presented to the Peace Conference in Paris. New York: The Nation Press. 15 cents.

THE RIDDLE OF NEARER ASIA. By BACIL MATHEWS. Viscount Bryce says: "The book is admirably calculated to provide the student who wishes to understand the conditions of missionary work in western Asia with essential facts and illuminating views stated in the clearest and briefest way. Seldom do we find so much good matter brought together in so small a compass." New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.25.

Biography.

ONE YEAR AT THE RUSSIAN COURT (1904-1905). By RENEE ELTON MAUD. Written, of course, from the viewpoint of the war which came later. Describes experiences in Petrograd and in the Caucasus. Chapter on Rasputin. New York: John Lane Company. \$3.

RIEMARCK. By C. GRANT ROBERTSON. A

Literature.

ENGLISH LITERATURE DURING THE LAST HALF CENTURY. By JOHN W. CUNLIFFE. Studies of Meredith, Hardy, Samuel Butler, Stevenson, Gissing, Shaw, Kipling, Conrad, Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett and some of the younger novelists, poets and Irish writers. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.

Textbooks.

THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY. By LYMAN P. POWELL and GERTRUDE W. POWELL. Textbook in patriotism. Consists entirely of excerpts of all kinds, both prose and verse. Contains such diverse things as President Wilson's war message and Vachel Lindsay's *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*. New York: Rand, McNally & Co.

LE CHEVALIER DE BLANCHEFLUR. By ELEANOR W. HUTCHISON. Six little comedies in French designed for acting by beginners. New York: D. C. Heath & Co. 48 cents.

MARMION: A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD. By SIR WALTER SCOTT. Volume in Merrill's English texts, edited, with an introduction and notes, by Zelma E. Clark.